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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

17 March 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Assessment of Recent Newsweek and Time Feature Articles
on Communist China

REFERENCES: Newsweek, 7 March 1966, pgs. 35-43
Time, 25 February 1966, p. 30

The Newsweek article, after some dubious comments on US foreign policy, develops a generally good analysis of Communist China's military strength. In trying to compensate for the false popular impression that Peking has mighty armies poised for widespread foreign conquests, the authors have let the pendulum swing a little too far the other way. We believe they somewhat underestimate the seriousness of Peking's intention to spread its doctrine throughout the world by capitalizing on occurrences of local dissidence to promote and assist "wars of liberation." On specifics regarding the Chinese armed forces, there are some inaccuracies, but these do not seriously damage the article: the general picture presented is one of the most realistic accounts to have appeared in the popular press. It is obvious that the authors had access to good information. (A more detailed analysis of the Newsweek article is appended.)

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2. The Time article is much shorter, jazzier, and overstated. Time was a little too quick to seize upon speculation and rumor that the USSR will try to "excommunicate" China at the upcoming 23rd Party Congress, or that Albania was turning away from China. The statement that China's industry is working overtime to produce war supplies for Vietnam and other revolutionary movements overstates the case. Current and past aid has put no serious strain on China. And we are not sure just what Time was trying to convey in its brief and confused discussion of China's nuclear and missile programs.

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Helms

The attached notes were prepared by
our Far East staff, I believe at your
request. ✓

*Thank you
Ht*

Abbot Smith

18 March 1966
(DATE)

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